PITTA

Newsletter of the Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh
New Series Volume 12 Number 2 February 2015 (Special Issue)

Editor's note

Some of our members had been to Kerala for a week-long birding camp from 9th to 15th of November, 2014. In this Special Issue of the Pitta, we are happy to bring you the experiences shared by the participants, along with a number of colourful photographs.

Munnar

(Day One & Two)

Surekha Aitabathula

Photo: Dr Samuel Sukumar

It seemed unnecessary to look for the typical black and yellow railway station boards; we could straight away recognise Kerala as soon as our train entered this unique landscape. Lush greenery is the first indicator. Scores of trees and plants possess clean leaves in myriad shades of green and sway in the constant breeze. Our train thundered past what looked like an uninterrupted landscape painting! This is how the BSAP birding camp to Kerala began, on a train that took twenty of us to Ernakulum Station. We had our first Kerala lunch here, hopped into our minibus and headed out to the mother of all hill stations - Munnar.

The landscape from Ernakulum to Munnar got more and more pristine as our bus ate up the miles in an unhurried drive. Our bus negotiated a serpentine climb as our Resort stood atop a hill. On arrival around late evening, eager to get the camp started, we spilled out of our bus and made a dash for our allotted rooms.

Lesser Hill Myna
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

Our group bonded well right from the beginning. The easy camaraderie, our common hobby and a holiday mood heightened our sense of excitement as we held up a clean slate for the Kerala bird list. This mood revved up our appetite, in anticipation of tasting typical Kerala cuisine, especially the fish-eaters amongst us! The established universal favourite was, however, *Appam.* The happy fallout of eating *appam* is that (a) you definitely cannot eat just one and (b) you don't know when to stop. The soft and delicious *appam* comes with a variety of curries. My take on this brilliant culinary delight is no matter how delicious your curry, the *appam* dominates your taste buds.

Situated at an altitude of 6000 ft in Idukki district, Munnar is an unending expanse of tea plantations and wildlife sanctuaries, pristine valleys and mountains and exotic species of flora

Nilgiri Tahr (Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

and fauna. Our resort had a botanical garden which caught the whole group's interest and made for a good learning experience. In the resort itself, some of our friends spotted Lesser Hill Mynas, White-cheeked Barbets, Large-billed Crows and Grey Wagtails.

On Day 2, we headed out of Munnar for a whole day of birding. Our first birding stop was the 97 sq km stretch of Eravikulam National Park, where the endangered Nilgiri Tahr is protected. This park holds, by far, the largest viable population of Tahr. It offers a magnificent view of the tea plantations and the rolling hills. *Neelakurinji* is a flowering plant endemic to this part of the Western Ghats which blooms once in twelve years!

There is a canteen near the bus bay at Eravikulam, where visitors often throw half-eaten edibles. So guess who we saw coming to feed on their newfound diet? Kerala Laughingthrush, Scaly Thrush, Malabar Whistling Thrush, and Indian Blackbird. Such sweet and salted snacks which these birds have become habituated to eating, contain *maida*, sugar, chocolate, milk, salt and junk food fats which are toxic and harmful to their health. Birds are not equipped to break down these foods which are fundamentally alien to their digestive systems. The ignorant human is unaware that he may be seriously harming the birds with this food. When will man learn that he is not the only rightful denizen of this planet, and that the immense wealth of nature is not for him to plunder?

Scaly Thrush (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Kerala Laughingthrush
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

Coming back to the birds, the Scaly Thrush is a gorgeously patterned beauty. The sexes are similar, 27–31 cm long, with black scaling on a paler white or yellowish background. The most striking identification feature in flight is the black band on the white underwings, a feature shared with the Siberian Thrush. The male's song is a loud, far-carrying mechanical whistle.

Another visitor to the canteen, the Kerala Laughingthrush is a species of laughingthrush endemic to the hills of the Western Ghats. Found in the high montane forests, this grey-bibbed, rufous-bellied bird with a prominent dark eye stripe and broad white brow was earlier grouped along with the grey-breasted subspecies of the Black-chinned Laughingthrush and known as the Grey-breasted Laughingthrush, but has now been designated as a separate species. This species has a dark grey-brown crown and narrow dark grey eye-stripe with a broad white supercilium above it, which extends behind the eye in the nominate subspecies but stops above the eye in the subspecies *meridionale*.

The Indian Blackbird also came for the crumbs. This bird looks like a darker version of the songster, Malabar Whistling Thrush. This species breeds in woods and gardens, and builds a neat, mud-lined, cup-shaped nest. It is omnivorous, eating a wide range of insects, earthworms, berries and fruits. Both sexes are territorial on breeding grounds and have a distinctive threat display.

Indian Blackbird (Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

We also saw the Malabar Whistling Thrush here. The genus name, *Myophonus*, means 'fly murderer' in Latin. Named after the American naturalist, Thomas Horsfield, this bird is often found in hilly countries near streams with flowing water. The bird has a remarkable whistle which has a human quality and is very musical and exuberant. So much so that it is also known as the 'Whistling Schoolboy'!

Malabar Whistling Thrush
(Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

Plain Prinia
(Photo: Aparna Surampudi)

White-bellied Shortwing
(Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

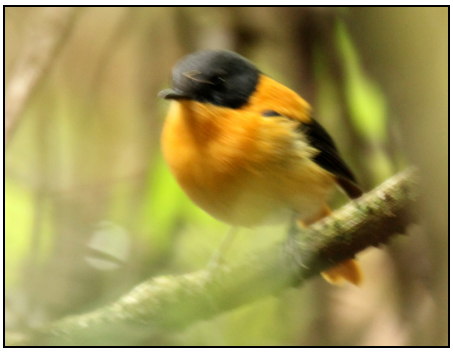
Another superb sighting here was the White-bellied Shortwing.

From there we walked up a winding road. The first sighting here was a Plain Prinia with a catch, perched on a stalk.

That was when we experienced what I would call the mother of all bird sightings! A raptor suddenly appeared high up in the sky, gliding magnificently. It was airborne for a very short duration before it landed on the ground, out of sight, but not before our fellow birders captured it on camera for posterity. I remember catching a glimpse of a very, very beautiful and busy black-stripe design on its fawnish underbelly. It came like a flash and vanished just as swiftly leaving us awestruck!

When the photograph was sent for identification to experts, lo and behold! The raptor was the Eurasian Sparrowhawk. Those of us who saw it did a belated celebratory dance on learning the identity later! Our members Umesh Mani and Gowthama Poludasu's pictures have become what could possibly be the first ever photographic record of this raptor in Kerala.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk (Photo: Umesh Mani)

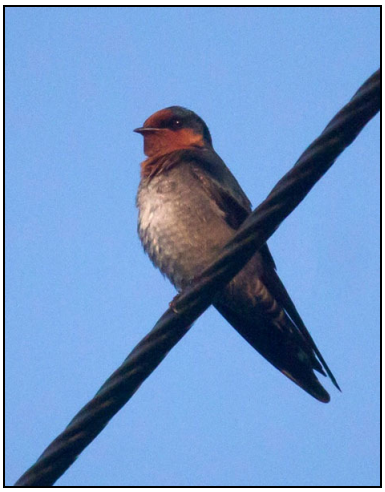


Black-and-Orange Flycatcher
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

We were fortunate enough to see the glittering, gem-like Black-and-orange Flycatcher. This endemic bird of the Western Ghats is near-threatened. The Square-tailed Bulbul, earlier known as the Black Bulbul, was another interesting sighting. This bird is a dark, sooty grey with a very short crest and square-tipped tail and has a glossy black head with a greenish sheen.

Nilgiri Pipit (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We also saw the Nilgiri Pipit, which is heavily-streaked on crown and upperparts, and has a comparatively shorter tail than the Paddyfield Pipit. These small passerine birds are slender, somewhat drab, ground-feeding insectivores of the open country. They are monogamous and territorial. Pipits are ground nesters, laying up to six speckled eggs.



Hill Swallow
(Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

On the wires, we saw a few swallows which were initially dismissed as Red-rumped Swallows before our guide informed us that they were actually the Hill Swallows, a recent split from the erstwhile Pacific Swallow.

Our next stop was a small patch of forest near a school in Kannimalai. Square-tailed Bulbuls, Tytler's Leaf Warbler, Malabar Grey Hornbill, Crested Serpent Eagle and Nilgiri Flycatchers were the interesting sightings here.

The last stop of the day was a location called Pothamedu which turned out to be more than satisfactory birding. We saw the Yellow-browed Bulbul – its yellow supercilium, the prominent eye-ring, the yellow underparts with olive-green upperparts, a contrasting jet black

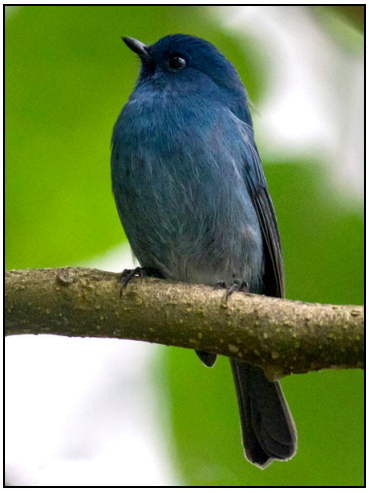
Square-tailed Bulbul
(Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

bill and the dark eye are striking. The Square-tailed or Black Bulbul was another happy sighting here. The bird has a distinct red bill and legs on a slaty grey to blackish body. Other sightings included White-cheeked Barbet, Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher, Nilgiri Flycatcher, Black Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, Orange Minivet, Greenish Warbler, Blyth's Reed Warbler, Crimson-fronted Barbet, Emerald Dove, Nilgiri Wood Pigeon and Greater Racket-tailed Drongo.

The Crimson-fronted Barbet was a sensational find to most of us who are used to seeing the regular Barbets. This bird is psychedelic in appearance, with a blue band running down the side of head and breast, an unstreaked green belly and flanks, and beautiful crimson cheeks, throat and breast.

The pronounced crest, the large bill and the never-ending tail of the Greater Racket-tailed Drongo are also very striking and dramatic.

Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher
(Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)



Nilgiri Flycatcher male
(Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

Nilgiri Flycatcher female
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

The day had thrown up some fabulous finds for us, such as the Kerala Laughingthrush, Indian/Eurasian Blackbird, White-bellied Shortwing, Scaly Thrush, Black Eagle, Hill Swallow, Nilgiri Flycatcher and Nilgiri Pipit.

Nilgiri Wood Pigeon
(Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

Thus ended Day 2 of our camp. For us birders, our cups had brimmed over with the sightings of some really stunning birds. Birding in Kerala is a thoroughly attractive proposition. Wherever you are, you are surrounded by greenery, which is a birdwatcher's main requirement. The environs are scenic with agricultural fields and green streets are dotted with prosperous-looking, independent houses with cottage roofs and pretty gardens. This is India's lucky state where rains never fail.

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

Red-whiskered Bulbul
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

Tytler's Leaf Warbler (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Black Eagle (Photo: Umesh Mani)

The Magic of Thattekad

(Day Three & Four)

Umesh Mani

Vernal Hanging Parrot (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Days 3 & 4 of the Kerala camp were the days we were supposed to spend at Thattekad Bird Sanctuary. Given that it is a birding hotspot *non pareil*, and boasts of a checklist of some 300 bird species, in my mind I had already (!) tagged these days as the high point of the trip. Thattekad had been on my wishlist since a long time, and the various trip reports and photographs posted by other visitors to Thattekad earlier had only served to push my anticipation sky-high. So when this opportunity to visit Thattekad finally materialised, I was, of course, happy, but was also worried in no small measure – worried that it may turn out to be a let-down.

Suffice to say that *that* did not happen - Thattekad more than lived up to its promise.

We had already scored the first *coup* of sorts, when we managed to get as our guide the legendary Eldhose who, it is said, knows Thattekad like the back of his hand – knows it so well, in fact, that he knows the DOB and address of every bird in Thattekad! Well, apocryphal as that last bit may be, it does show the solid reputation and track record that he has built up over the years. So when Shafaatsaab secured his services well in advance, I knew we were in good hands.

The day started with a four-hour drive from Munnar to Thattekad. So, by the time we arrived at the sanctuary around 11AM, I for one was itching to get started.

After a few to-and-fro calls between Shafaatsaab and Eldhose, we picked him up *en route* and drove directly towards the sanctuary. The first few people to get down from the bus were treated to the first sighting of the Malabar Grey Hornbill, but by the time the rest of us could disembark, the bird had already moved into the trees, with Gowthama and a couple of others in hot pursuit. There was also a Greater Racket-tailed Drongo dancing attendance on the Hornbill; both seemed to be moving in tandem.

These initial sightings, it seemed, had started the adrenaline flowing, and most members of the group were quite excited. Since we were to have a quick breakfast before entering the sanctuary, Shafaatsaab had his hands full, getting everyone to settle down and get on with it.

Anyway, after a quick bite, we rushed back to the bus. Eldhose told us that he was taking us to the core area of the sanctuary, where visitors generally are not allowed to enter. When we reached there, we were met by Ajomon, one of his assistants, and they engaged in a rapid-fire discussion in Malayalam before taking off at a fast pace, with all of us following.

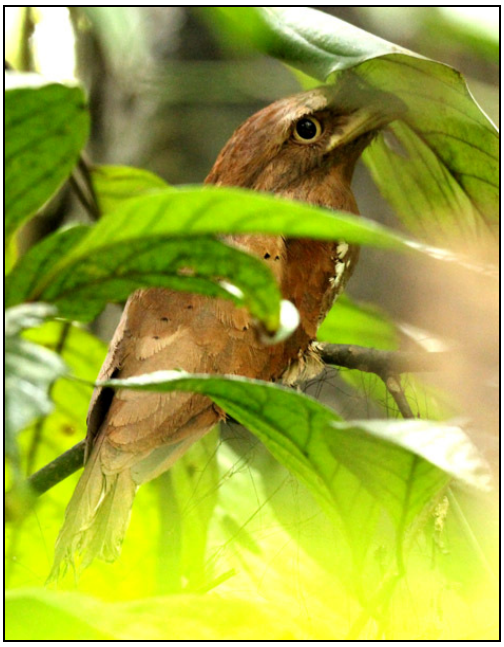
The first thing we saw was the beautiful, maroon Malabar Giant Squirrel, with its trademark bushy tail, which is almost longer than the rest of its body. It was foraging high up in the palm trees, and we got a crick in our necks, trying to see

Malabar Giant Squirrel (Photo: Umesh Mani)

and photograph it. Next to follow was the Malabar Woodshrike (*Tephrodornis sylvicola)*, which used to be regarded as a sub-species of the Common Woodshrike, but has recently been split and given full species status. Besides, some members had also seen a pair of Crested Serpent Eagles in flight.

Malabar Woodshrike (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Suddenly, Eldhose received a message from his assistant, and started walking briskly off, herding us along. Just a few minutes' walk away, they stopped at a head-high bush and pointed out a dry brown leaf to us. At least, it *looked* like a dry brown leaf. It took quite a few minutes before we realised that we were looking at the flagship species of Thattekad – the Sri Lankan Frogmouth!



Sri Lankan Frogmouth female
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

For the past two days, we had been listening to Gowthama's incessant recital of one mantra - "I want to see the Frogmouth". Finally, I thought, we would not have to listen to that any more. Little did I realise that the only change that would happen was that he (and, to be fair, most of us) were now going to be reciting, "I <u>*saw*</u> the Frogmouth"!!

A few words about the Frogmouth. A master of camouflage, besides its cryptic plumage, its main defence mechanism seems to be its ability to stay still for hours at a time. As we too saw, it stayed so still that someone actually said, "Is it really a bird? I think it is a wooden model!" So much so that after the photographers had had their fill, some other members of the group were able to get close enough to actually photograph it using their cellphones! Possibly the only miss at that point was that we could see only the female of the species.

But still, what a way to start - the number one target species ticked off within barely half an hour of walking in!

Thus far, the excitement had kept us going, but we suddenly realised that it was rather hot and sultry! The change in temperature from a cool and pleasant Munnar to humid lowland Kerala was hitting us quite badly. Our shirts were soaked, and we were 'sweating like pigs', as the expression goes, causing Mr Bhaskara Rao to make the rather understated remark, "You are all sweating?"

But we had no energy to respond, and needed something special to re-energise us. That came in the form of the next sighting.

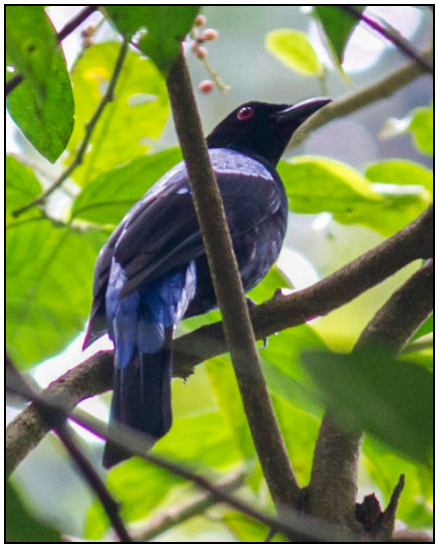
We saw Ajomon come rushing up to Eldhose, pointing and gesticulating excitedly. Immediately, Eldhose led us onto a side track where we saw, sitting majestically in solo splendour, the stunning Malabar Trogon (male). The Trogon is well-known as one of the shyest birds around, and we were desperately praying that it wouldn't take off before we had a good look at it. At first, the bird was facing away from us, and we could only see the orange-brown back of the bird. But as we, very very slowly, inched closer, the bird turned partly around and gave us the first glimpse of the breath-taking colours that it sports on its front – bright crimson-red underparts with the black throat, square white tail and black-and-grey vermiculated wings. The shutterbugs went wild, with cameras clicking away to glory for the next nearly 15-20 minutes. Surprisingly, the bird just kept sitting there, allowing us to approach closer and closer, then actually walk under the branch where it was sitting and go to the other side (from which side the light was better). I suspect the photographers must have all come away with at least a couple of hundred photographs of the Trogon within those few minutes.

Malabar Trogon male (Photo: Umesh Mani)

20 minutes with a Malabar Trogon! Things were getting better and better.

Eldhose seems to have worked out a system whereby, while the group is 'oohing' and 'aahing' over one great species, he and his assistants work on locating the *next* great species. I don't know how they do it – I suspect a lot of hard work has gone into it – but the end result is that we get treated to one great sighting after another.

We did observe, many times, Eldhose or Ajomon standing away from the group, and listening for calls emanating from the forest. They seemed to be able to identify calls that we could not even hear, and use them to lead us in the right direction. As many of our senior birders keep saying, birding involves more than just *seeing* the bird – we need to learn to be silent, to listen and observe, before we can actually see the bird.



Asian Fairy Bluebird
(Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

Coming back, we had been hearing the tell-tale hammering of a woodpecker somewhere close by, since quite some time. We started moving away – imagine, walking away from a Malabar Trogon! – trying to locate the woodpecker. There was some urgency (since Thattekad has, among its checklist, the White-bellied Woodpecker which, obviously, we all wanted to see - and who knew which woodpecker was hammering away?) and also some exasperation – since the call was echoing all around, and we just couldn't get a fix on the direction where it was coming from. After spending some time searching, and finally giving up, we started moving up the track when Aparna spotted the very endearing Heart-spotted Woodpecker. But it was on the move and, unfortunately, most of the group did not get to see it. At another spot, some members did see a Black-rumped Flameback, though.

Moving further, Eldhose identified the call of the Blue-throated Flycatcher coming from within the tangle of bushes on the side of the track. Again, this was a species that I think none of the group had seen before, so we were all keen to get a look at the bird. For a change, however, it didn't oblige us – some members got a glimpse of it far within the thicket, but it soon moved away, and did not appear again.

The next dose of excitement was not far away. Just a few minutes' walk ahead led us to a small patch which was buzzing with activity. The first bird to be seen here was the Asian Fairy Bluebird, with its incredible glossy blue-black plumage grabbing the attention even through the thick foliage and very confusing dappling effects of stray sun-rays popping through the canopy. There was, in fact, a pair of the birds, which kept the group engaged for quite some time. Barely a few metres away, we also spotted the Asian Paradise-flycatcher, the Brown-breasted Flycatcher and, a little further, the Orange Minivet. Also seen was a beautiful Jewel Beetle with its metallic green colours.

A Jewel Beetle (Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

Brown-breasted Flycatcher
(Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

By now, we were tired and famished, and it was time to turn back and head out for lunch. On the way back, some members saw (though not very well, unfortunately) the Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo, the Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker and the Grey Junglefowl. After spending a few more minutes with the Frogmouth which, incredibly, was still sitting in the same bush, we moved out of the sanctuary and onward to lunch.

So much action within a couple of hours! We were happy with what we had seen so far, but of course, we were hungry for more. For the moment, though, it was time to pay attention to a more literal hunger, which was dealt with via a simple Kerala-style meal of plump boiled rice with various accompaniments.

After lunch, we started off on the second leg of the day's birding, at an area called Urulanthanni. *En route*, while crossing a river, we saw some of the usual commoners, like the Lesser Whistling Ducks, White-breasted Kingfisher, Green Bee-eater, Blue Rock Pigeon, Cattle Egret and Little Cormorant. Within a few minutes, we had started on our walk at Urulanthanni. We were greeted by the sighting of the Green Warbler (which, we understood, is a split from the Greenish Warbler), and the repeated calls of a Jungle Owlet which, in spite of a lot of searching, we could not locate.

Black-headed Cuckooshrike
(Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

Moving ahead, we hit a patch of frenetic bird activity – within a short while, we were met by the Loten's Sunbird, a gang of Jungle Babblers, a Plum-headed Parakeet and, as if scattered here and there, four types of Drongos (Bronzed, Ashy, Black and Greater Racket-tailed). Of these, the Bronzed Drongo gave great views, staying on its perch for a long time, and allowing the photographers to click away to their hearts' content.

Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo
(Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

Bronzed Drongo (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Right after that, we came across a Black-rumped Flameback spiraling its way up a tree trunk, and a Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker playing tag with a pair of Golden-fronted Leafbirds. A few of the lovely Vernal Hanging Parrots entertained us for quite some time with their upside-down antics. Also in the vicinity were the Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Rufous Treepie, several of the beautiful Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters, and a pair of White-cheeked Barbets.

Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

So many wonderful sightings packed into a short time had whetted our appetite for more, and we moved ahead with great anticipation. We were rewarded by views of the Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Crested Serpent Eagle, and 2-3 of the Malabar Starlings looking venerable with their 'white hair'. Also seen were some Malabar Parakeets, another lifer for most of us.

Golden-fronted Leafbird (Photo: Umesh Mani)

By now, the intense humidity had taken its toll and several of the senior members of the group had decided to hang back and bird from where they were, while they waited for the rest of the group to return from the walk. Some of us moved further with the very energetic Eldhose, who led us through some winding paths through the thickly-clustered bushes, and we realised that it would be so easy to get lost in there. Trying to stick together, we still found ourselves drifting apart into smaller sub-groups, each walking at its own pace, though on the same trail.

Malabar Starling (Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

Some time later, we decided to turn back and rejoin the rest of the members. It was then that I spotted a blue-looking bird perched on the top of a tall tree, a little distance away. My first reaction was 'Roller' – not surprising, as it did finally turn out to be a member of the Roller family – but then the bird seemed a much darker blue. When I zoomed in on it, I let out a muted yell – Dollarbird!

Dollarbird (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We immediately telephoned (since no one had the energy to call out, or walk across physically!) Eldhose and a couple of other members of the group, to try and get them over to see this beautiful bird. Some members, unfortunately, were too far away, or couldn't be reached, but several did get back to where we were, and got to see one of the iconic species of Thattekad.

The Dollarbird is, apparently, thus named because of the light-blue coin-shaped spots on its outer feathers, which are visible in flight. As far as we were concerned, dollar or not, it was *paisa vasool*!

To my mind, the Dollarbird was surely the star bird of this leg – which honour would probably have gone to the White-bellied Treepie, if only it had not played so hard-to-get! Because it happened again right after, as it had happened earlier – as we walked back from the Dollarbird, we again got tantalising glimpses of the birds flying around just behind the first curtain of trees – thus avoiding being seen properly – and calling (from two different directions!) and confusing the issue even further.

Gowthama, though, somehow managed to get at least a record photo of the Treepie, the only one of the group to do so.

White-bellied Treepie
(Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

We now started trudging our way back, totally exhausted by the heat and humidity. *En route*, we saw a group of some 10-12 Crested Treeswifts taking it easy on a bare tree – maybe they were also feeling the heat. We certainly missed their characteristic skydiving antics. A Malabar Grey Hornbill and an audible Southern Coucal later, we were out of the sanctuary, dying for a pick-me-up in the form of some *chai* or other nourishment.

Crested Treeswift female (L) and male (R)
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

It was close to 4PM, and just as we began thinking of winding up for the day, Eldhose informed us that he had arranged for some people at the Forest Department to take us around the forest area near the Department office. Groaning inwardly at the thought of more walking, we nevertheless appreciated his effort to plan something extra for us, and ensure that we got in the maximum birding possible in the available time.

When we arrived at the location, two officers from the Forest Department were waiting for us. As soon as we walked in to the campus, we were greeted by the keening call of the Lesser Yellownape somewhere high up above us. Try as we might, though, we just could not get to see the bird. We were consoled by the sight of a Draco ('flying lizard') making its way up a tree nearby.

Draco (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Malabar Parakeet (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Soon, our friendly FD host got us started. We walked past a water body which contained some of the usual suspects – Little Cormorant, Indian Pond Heron, Little Egret, and a few Lesser Whistling Ducks. One 'Cattle Egret' was later identified from photographs as a white-morph Western Reef Egret. Entering a forest trail once more, the first sighting was a small group of Malabar Parakeets busily foraging among the fruiting trees in the canopy above. Some of them were finally seen at a 'photographable' position, and some of us got a few shots before they moved into the canopy again. This was followed by some 'back-home' birds like the Golden Oriole, Large-billed Crow, Ashy Drongo etc, before we first heard the 'cackling' call of, and then saw, a couple of Malabar Grey Hornbills.

Western Reef Egret (white morph)
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

It was getting overcast now, and looked like it might rain any minute. Walking ahead quickly to try and cover a bit more of the area, we walked through a patch of brush and came out on the sides of a large lake. There weren't many birds, though – an unidentified Sandpiper that shot off like a bullet, a lone Common Kingfisher, and a circling Brahminy Kite were the only birds on view.

Meanwhile, I had wandered back to the trail, waiting for the group to start back. I saw a male Grey Junglefowl nonchalantly walk across the trail some distance away, although the light, unfortunately, was too poor by now to get decent photographs. As we moved back, the hosts took us across a vast patch of grassland, but bird activity seemed to have died down – barring a few Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters and a Drongo or two, there wasn't much to see. We were taunted yet again by the calls – without any views – of the White-bellied Treepie, which seemed to subscribe to a policy of backstage rather than onstage appearance.

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A few Southern Hill Mynas favoured some of us with a view, but many of us did not get to see it here. We were blasé about it, however, shrugging off the miss with the thought that we had seen it in Munnar earlier.

Suddenly it started pouring, and a period of intense physical activity followed as many members made a dash for safety. Some serious coordination was also required before we could link up with the members who had gone missing in the process.

Thanking our hosts, we finally left for the hotel, coming to the end of a tiring but very productive day, peppered by lots of birding action and several lovely sightings. Tomorrow would be another day!

Malabar Grey Hornbill (Photo: Umesh Mani)

On day-4, aching bones and creaking joints notwithstanding, we made an early start, since we had only about half a day available at Thattekad before we had to leave for our next halt, Cochin.

The day started with Eldhose taking us to his home where, apparently, members of his family have been feeding birds with bananas and other fruit, every morning at 7AM sharp, since the past 10 years! *En route*, on a large rock we saw a squirrel eating something, and there were also a couple of White-cheeked Barbets. However, Eldhose soon rushed us off to the house, as feeding time was nearing. He told us that the birds were like kids, raising a clamour if the food was not available on time, and made sure to have us all settled in before the time came to feed the birds. He told us that there was a clear hierarchy as to who would eat first and who would come later, which we saw in practice soon afterwards.

Though many birds seemed to be congregating on the trees nearby, it was the Jungle Babbler that ate first, followed by the White-cheeked Barbets, a pair of Malabar Grey Hornbills, and a Rufous Treepie. There was also a Black-rumped Flameback nearby, though we did not see it actually feed on the fruit.

The photographers, of course, took lots of photographs, but the others too enjoyed what was quite an interesting experience. Whatever the merits and demerits of feeding birds, one has to appreciate the effort and commitment of the family in providing for the birds. It is also to be noted that they provide only natural food like fruit, and not cooked food like rice, as is a common practice in many Indian households.

Grey Junglefowl male (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Loten's Sunbird (Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

Starting off from there, we stopped at the above-mentioned rock for a little while, and saw a Grey Junglefowl pair walk across. We saw the squirrel, and a Black-rumped Flameback, feed on some food that had been put out. Also in attendance on nearby electric wires were several Chestnut-headed and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, a family of four White-cheeked Barbets, and a Laughing Dove.

By now, though, we were restless to get back into the forest. Today's plan was, first, an area called Bhoothathankettu, which turned out to be as bird-rich as the trails of the previous day had been.

The first birds we saw as we walked in were three superb species – a Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, and sharing a branch, the Flame-throated Bulbul and the Yellow-browed Bulbul!

Yellow-browed Bulbul (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Brown Shrike
(Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

A few minutes later, Eldhose took us to a small clearing in the forest, surrounded by tall trees. Standing amid thick grass all around, we were spending more time checking for leeches than looking for birds.

However, that lasted only for a couple of minutes – till the first bird sighting, that is! Starting off with a Brown Shrike and a Black-hooded Oriole, we were soon ticking off some rather interesting species – Green Imperial Pigeon, Large Cuckooshrike, Malabar Starling, Southern Hill Myna, and so on. However, our eyes were peeled for the 'other' iconic species of Thattekad, and as if to oblige us, it – or rather, a pair of 'it's – soon made an appearance. That's right – I am referring to the Black Baza!

Green Imperial Pigeon (Photo: Umesh Mani)

As soon as it came on the scene, there was a collective sigh of awe at the sheer beauty of the bird. Initially, of course, we saw it overflying, but it circled a little and soon perched on a tree. Binoculars and cameras went into action, and once we could see it properly, with its distinctive plumage and the trademark black crest, the only sounds were the 'oohs' and 'aahs' of the group!

Black Baza (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Flame-throated Bulbul (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A few minutes, and what sounded like a few hundred photographs, later, people slowly started paying a little attention to other birds which were, until then, 'also present'. There was a Lesser Yellownape, again missed by many of us, the Plum-headed Parakeet, the elusive White-bellied Treepie (again just a glimpse!), and an Asian Paradise-flycatcher. A Flame-throated Bulbul gave good views, though we had to bend and stretch to see it sitting inside a low bush. A Blue-faced Malkoha also marked attendance, as did the Southern Coucal (again, just heard, not seen). Also, somewhat incongruously, a River Tern.

Meanwhile, the Bazas had been active, taking off, circling and perching, again and again. This gave a good opportunity to see them well, though they were quite high up in the trees.

By now, it was getting to be time to move on. As we walked back, we first heard, and then got glimpses of, the White-bellied Blue Flycatcher, and also saw a Large-billed Leaf Warbler. These birds quite nicely rounded off the first leg of the day.

Large-billed Leaf Warbler
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

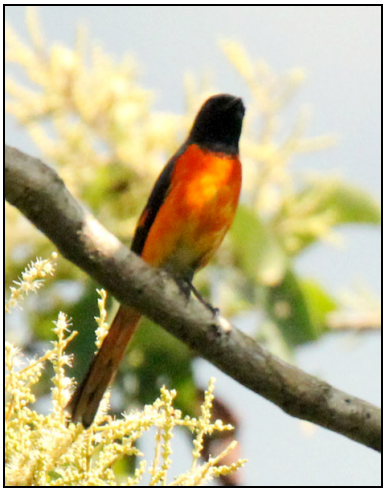
Driving towards the Idamalayar Reserve Forest, we decided to have *en route* a 'quick' breakfast that turned out to be 'not so quick' – probably the small roadside restaurant had never had a gang of 20-odd hungry birders descend on it before, as they were obviously unprepared for the sudden spike in consumption! So we had to wait a while before all of us were fed satisfactorily.

We also had Ajitkumarsaab and some other members appreciating an ingenious contraption in the kitchen, wherein the staff had modified a large vessel in such a way that they could separately boil water, heat milk, and make tea, all at the same time! A happy discussion on 'native innovation' followed, before someone suddenly reminded the group that we were yet to reach Idamalayar! That got us reoriented, and we soon moved off.

Crimson-backed Sunbird (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Reaching Idamalayar, the first thing we saw were some gigantic droppings, which reminded us that we were still in wild elephant country. A little later, we saw the first birds of this forest – Southern Hill Myna, Crimson-backed (or Small) Sunbird and an Asian Fairy Bluebird. Across a deep valley, quite far away, there was a lot of activity – we saw an unidentified Leafbird fly across, the beautiful Orange Minivet, Bronzed and Ashy Drongos, a Vernal Hanging Parrot, and some small unidentifiable birds (one of which was later identified from photographs as a Philippine Shrike).

Orange Minivet female
(Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)



Orange Minivet male
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

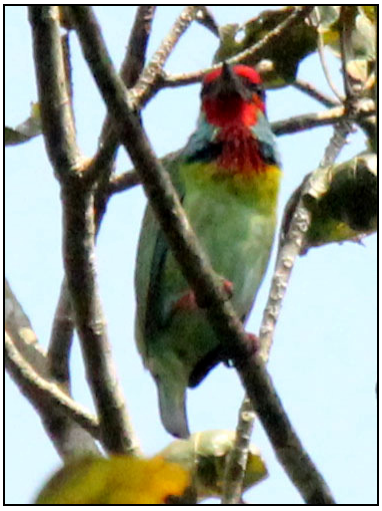
Philippine Shrike (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Also seen – too far away, sadly – was another special species – the Grey-headed Bulbul. With its very restricted range, we had been hoping to see and photograph this species during this trip, but we had to be satisfied with just a glimpse of the beautiful bird.

We decided to walk a little further, and were rewarded by the sighting of the lovely Malabar Barbet, as also an Asian Brown Flycatcher.

By now, the sun was high, and it was really hot. We also needed to make a start for Cochin. So we turned back and, as if in farewell, we heard a Common Hawk Cuckoo give out its haunting call.

Dropping Eldhose off on the way, we left, sad that we had such limited time here, but happy that we had been able to see a good cross-section of Kerala's precious bird diversity.



Malabar Barbet
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

Indian Golden Oriole female (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Chavakkad Beach & Enamavu Kole

(Day Five)

Geethanjali Rajaram

White-cheeked Barbet (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Two exciting days of bird watching, guided by Eldhose, had whetted our appetites for more. Can any birder ever be satisfied with what he or she sees in a day? After a hot cup of coffee or tea to jolt us awake after scant hours of sleep, and a hearty breakfast to sustain us, we boarded the Tempo Traveler. We had been spending so much time in the vehicle that it had become something of a second home to us. Our trip that day was to Chavakkad Beach and Enamavu Kole.

Though we were more than ready, we encountered a minor problem - there was some confusion regarding the route, which was soon cleared up by Mr. Haragopal. Yours truly (affectionately christened 'Geetha Akka') played translator, stepping in now and again to help overcome the language barrier. The driver Shah Jehan, named after the most romantic Mughal Emperor, was one of the best I had seen in a long time. An amiable personality, he calmly drove through the trickiest of paths with a smile.

We drove along narrow roads; one time, we even had to go off the road a time or two to accommodate a bus travelling in the opposite direction! Apart from that minor hiccup, the drive went smoothly. We found ourselves driving along the coast for a large part of the trip, right next to the sea. There were many beautiful sights on that drive, the beautiful houses with their red-tiled roofs, the little shops selling vegetables and bananas that one could spy now and again, and even the roads themselves, lined with coconut palms.

We were passing through a sleepy little town, just coming alive, when I gave in to temptation, turned my eyes to the sky and started searching for birds. I squinted, my search hindered a little by the rising sun and sleep-deprived eyes. Still, I was not surprised by the variety of birds I could spot. They are all around us, if only we take a moment to stop and quietly observe. I saw all kinds of birds, the humble House Crow, Rock Pigeon, Brahminy Kite, Black Kite, White-breasted Kingfisher, Indian Cormorant, and Pond Heron amongst others. I jotted down all their names hurriedly, lest I forget them. The most interesting of them, however was a Swift which we couldn't identify. It had a whitish underbelly, and a greyish upper part. With just that information, it could have been a White-rumped Needletail or a Brown-backed Needletail. Normally I would have requested Umesh or Gowthama to capture the bird with their cameras, but being in a moving vehicle made that impossible.

On the way to Chavakkad beach, we had to take a ferry and cross the Periyar River. The Tempo Traveler simply drove onto the ferry with the eighteen of us still aboard. We promptly stepped out to enjoy the view and the fresh air, but it wasn't long before we whipped out our binoculars to spot birds. We weren't disappointed; we saw Little Egrets, Brahminy Kites, Little Cormorants, Intermediate Egrets, House Crows and River Terns…Once again, I took care to jot down their names; recording which species one spots and where is a very important habit for a birding enthusiast.

When we reached Chavakkad beach, the sun was high up and it was too hot to enjoy birding. We headed straight to a small wayside shop at the beach to combat the heat with tasty Chocobar ice-creams or coconut water. We split up after that - some members visited the toddy shop out of curiosity, and some walked around to see if they could spot any birds. We did see a family of Black Drongos, some Common Mynas, House Crows, and a few Swallows/Swifts circling above. The birds created a ruckus, calling out excitedly as they wheeled and darted overhead.

We soon got tired of the view as there weren't many birds around. We realised we would have to go the wetlands (Kole is the name for wetlands in Kerala) to have a decent chance of spotting some birds.

We boarded the bus again, and started driving towards Enamavu Kole. It wasn't long after that, that I spotted a Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo perched on a coconut tree. From within the Tempo Traveler, the angle afforded to me was limited, and I was quite convinced that the bird was a Lesser Racket-tail. To my embarrassment, it turned out to be the common, if beautiful, Black Drongo. But no one ridiculed me for my mistake and they were willing to teach and share their knowledge of birds without making me feel small. As a newcomer, I feel that this welcoming and generous spirit is the best part of the BSAP community.

After the rather sparse bird sightings at the beach, we were only too happy to see that Enamavu Kole was teeming with birds. The beautiful sight of a family of Common Coots, complete with small chicks, set the tone for the birding session. On one side of where we were, there was a water body, and on the other, a green paddyfield. The location could not have been better! Excited voices from the others in my group had me turn towards the paddyfield; there was a Eurasian Marsh Harrier flying over the field at a distance.

White-rumped Munia (Photo: Umesh Mani)

As happens quite often on our excursions, Shafaatji kicked off the process of identifying various birds. Cameras clicked continuously as we spotted a flock of White-rumped Munias, a Rufous Treepie, and a Golden Oriole close by. We spotted a distant Marsh Harrier sitting amidst the green grass. Strangely, the bird remained quiet, and did not move from its position till we boarded the bus. Maybe there was something wrong with it's health?

Eurasian Marsh Harrier (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Moving on, I was delighted to see several Terns sitting on a high tension wire, as if posing for us. We were afforded ample opportunity to see their features through binoculars and distinguish between the River Terns and the Whiskered Terns. Not long after, I was asked to look at a lone heron in the paddyfield and identify it. To my surprise, and delight, it was a Purple Heron!

I also noticed a Darter lifting its snake-like neck from the water every once in a while to take a breath. As we headed back to the bus, all chattering in excited voices, we spotted one last bird, a White-breasted Waterhen that was disturbed by all the commotion.

Darter (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A flock of Terns (Photo: Umesh Mani)

By now, the only thing on our minds after that satisfying field trip was lunch! One hearty lunch later, we headed towards Cherai Beach in Vypin Islands which is twenty-five kilometers from Kochi. We reached at 4:30PM and headed straight to the beach for some well-deserved relaxation. Some of us headed straight for the water while others sat on the parapet, soaking in the beautiful sight of waves breaking on the shore and letting the cool ocean breeze wash away their tiredness. We enjoyed the soothing sensation of soft waves floating us gently off our sore feet, and setting us down on blissfully soft sand, even in the midst of a heated game of volleyball…After that refreshing bath, we called it a day and left for the hotel.

It was only 6 PM when we left, so, naturally, the day did not end there. While some of us decided to relax at the hotel, the others, the youngsters, decided to explore the Lulu Mall, Asia's second biggest Mall. While there, we even played kids and rode on a toy train! With that, we ended the day on a high note, and returned to the hotel. It was time to get a few hours rest: we would be up at 5 AM the next morning for our next birding adventure.

Kumarakom, Alleppey & Kadamakkudy

(Day Six & Seven)

Dr Jayati Mitra

It was a pleasant morning at Ernakulam as we sipped coffee, ready to start our journey towards Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary. During the last few days, we had had a hectic tour, climbing up and down the hilly terrains and spotting many endemic Malabar birds, which were lifers for most of us. But at Ernakulam, we again saw the ubiquitous House Sparrows and Oriental Magpie Robins foraging near the tea stall. The call of the White-cheeked Barbet was instantly recognisable – a repeated *kutroo…, kutroo…* - and the bird was seen perched on the treetop amidst the dense foliage. Unlike the Coppersmith Barbet, this bird has a bold white cheek patch and a prominent white supercilium. It had been our constant companion throughout the tour.

We crossed over the Kumbalam bridge and stopped over for a while. The water body seen alongside was a part of the Wembanad Lake, fed with fresh water from the hills. A check dam has been constructed to prevent the salt water from contaminating the lake and hence to enable paddy cultivation. The lake was partially choked with water hyacinth. A mixed flock of swallows were flying and circling overhead, and a lone Little Cormorant was sitting quietly at the edge on the far end of the water body.

Soon, we continued our journey and ended up at the Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary. The sanctuary has been declared as a Ramsar site and is one of the largest gathering place for Black-crowned Night Herons. It is also a breeding site for Darters and Black-headed Ibises. Before entering the sanctuary, we were delighted to feast on delicious hot *appam* and *puttu* at the local eatery, while watching the Jungle Mynas and Green Bee-eaters flying around outside.

We walked straight into the sanctuary on the cobbled path and our first sighting was a pair of Greater Racket-tailed Drongos, with their long wire-like tails ending in small knobs. These birds are fairly common in this forest. Our attention was diverted by the harsh call of the Rufous Treepie and we could vividly see its long greyish-black-tipped tail.

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

A narrow stretch of water ran parallel to our path across the dense mangrove forest. Rubber trees and different varieties of creepers blocked the sunlight as we made our way forward. The forest was full of Asian Koels, whose calls were so soothing to our ears. The tiny sunbirds flying around were smaller than the Purple Sunbird and had a striking deep crimson colouration on the mantle. These were the Crimson-backed Sunbirds endemic to the Western Ghats. A small flutter among the foliage drew our attention and some long white streamers were visible – an Asian Paradise-flycatcher was hiding in the bush. We saw the bright yellow colour of the Golden Oriole flashing across the treetops, and Large-billed Crows were present in large numbers. By this time we had reached almost to the other end and it was time to return and explore the backwaters. Before leaving we viewed a highly informative documentary film prepared by the Forest Department.

Photo: Dr Samuel Sukumar

Moving on, we reached the Alappuzha jetty and boarded a motor boat anchored at the backwaters. About a dozen Whiskered Terns were flying around as we moved along. The more enthusiastic young birders climbed on to the upper deck to have a better view while the rest enjoyed their fermented coconut drink while being comfortably seated below. There was water everywhere, separated by narrow stretches of land inhabited by the local population. Gradually the sun rose up high in the sky. Not many birds were seen except for the Brahminy Kites, which were soaring higher and higher and fading away from sight. These birds are found mainly in coastal areas and wetlands, and can be distinguished from Black Kites by their reddish-brown wings and a contrasting white-coloured head and breast. The tail is also rounded and not forked. A Common Kingfisher created some excitement but otherwise it was a monotonous ride.

At noon the weather changed abruptly. Black clouds filled the sky as we halted for lunch. Starting with a few drops, the rain poured as we savoured the steaming local rice with fish fry. A pet Brahminy Kite added some flavour to our mood. After the rainfall ceased, we sailed along and there was renewed activity in nature. Mixed flocks of Barn, Red-rumped and Wire-tailed Swallows in huge numbers filled the sky, circling and gorging on the hordes of flying insects which had come out due to the heavy downpour. This sight was

enjoyable no doubt, but we badly wanted to see something more and this time we were rewarded. The surprise came as we looked at the overhead wire across the water. A big-sized kingfisher was sitting on it and its long stout pink bill and greenish blue plumage gave away its identity.

Stork-billed Kingfisher (Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

The Stork-billed Kingfisher, known for its presence in the Wembanad lake, was silently trying to stalk its prey. We turned the boat 360° and stretched our necks to get a glimpse from all angles amidst the clicking of shutters. After satisfying ourselves to the fullest we again moved further along.

A few Red-wattled Lapwings and Whiskered Terns were flying above but the ripples in the water drew our attention. We were in for another interesting sight – a Darter was stretching its long neck from the water and diving again and again. For some time, we kept following its hide-and-seek game in and out of the water till it disappeared from sight.

Darter (Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

By now, the light was fading and we were on our return trip. The sound of laughter reached our ears on the upper deck – our friend Surekha was trying her hand at navigating the boat and everyone seemed to relish the moment.

Soon after disembarking at the jetty, we observed some fluttering over the palm trees at the approaching islands. A Black-rumped Flameback was pecking on the stump, and a Black-hooded Oriole was flying from one tree to another. The latter has a totally black head and neck, unlike the Golden Oriole, and the contrasting colour looked beautiful. Soon, we reached the city and became busy with shopping. After all, tomorrow we would be leaving Kerala!

On the last day, our birding destination was Kadamakkudy, a small village near Ernakulam. We travelled via Kothad on a misty morning. Amidst the banana and coconut plantations, we saw many Indian Pond Herons moving around. Kadamakkudy had some paddyfields, and a large water-body where we sighted the Large Cormorant. Flocks of Scaly-breasted Munias were feeding on ripe grains. At the same place, Ashy Prinia, Zitting Cisticola and Blyth's Reed Warbler were also seen. A huge flock of Barn Swallows was lined up on the overhead electric cable.

Osprey (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Whiskered Tern (Photo: Gowthama Poludasu)

All of a sudden, a pair of Ospreys came around, diving very low over the field. They kept chasing each other for quite some time and faded away into the distance. This bird is diurnal and preys on fish; the most interesting characteristic is that it can reverse its outer toe to catch its prey effectively with two toes in front and two behind. From the underside the head and wings are mostly white while its upper parts are coloured brown.

Now it was time to return. All these days, so much had been seen and enjoyed, and definitely during parting time we felt sad. At last, we bade good-bye to Shahjahan, our driver, who had become an integral part of our group, and boarded the train for our return journey, hoping to come back soon and enjoy new experiences.

Complete list of birds seen during the trip:

Sl. No.	Common Name	Scientifc Name
1	Kerala Laughingthrush	*Trochalopteron fairbanki*
2	Blue-capped Rock Thrush	*Monticola cinclorhynchus*
3	Nilgiri Pipit	*Anthus nilghiriensis*
4	Indian Blackbird	*Turdus simillimus*
5	White-bellied Shortwing (a.k.a. White-bellied Blue Robin or Nilgiri Blue Robin)	*Myiomela major*
6	Malabar Grey Hornbill	*Ocyceros griseus*
7	Jungle Babbler	*Turdoides striata*
8	Lesser Whistling Duck	*Dendrocygna javanica*
9	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*
10	Purple Swamphen	*Porphyrio porphyrio*
11	Oriental Darter	*Anhinga melanogaster*
12	Little Cormorant	*Microcarbo niger*
13	Great Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*
14	Indian Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*
15	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*
16	Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*
17	Intermediate Egret	*Mesophoyx intermedia*
18	Western Reef Egret (white morph)	*Egretta gularis*
19	Grey Heron	*Ardea cinerea*
20	Purple Heron	*Ardea purpurea*
21	Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*
22	Asian Palm Swift	*Cypsiurus balasiensis*
23	Red-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus indicus*
24	Black Baza	*Aviceda leuphotes*
25	Green Imperial Pigeon	*Ducula aenea*
26	Brahminy Kite	*Haliastur indus*
27	Eurasian Marsh Harrier	*Circus aeruginosus*
28	Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*
29	Black Eagle	*Ictinaetus malaiensis*
30	Crested Serpent Eagle	*Spilornis cheela*
31	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*
32	Dollarbird	*Eurystomus orientalis*
33	Indian Black-lored Tit	*Parus aplonotus*
34	Grey Junglefowl	*Gallus sonneratii*
35	White-breasted Waterhen	*Amaurornis phoenicurus*
36	Eurasian Coot	*Fulica atra*
37	Whiskered Tern	*Chlidonias hybrida*
38	Indian River Tern	*Sterna aurantia*
39	Gull-billed Tern	*Gelochelidon nilotica*
40	Nilgiri Wood Pigeon	*Columba elphinstonii*

41	Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia*
42	Vernal Hanging Parrot	*Loriculus vernalis*
43	Plum-headed Parakeet	*Psittacula cyanocephala*
44	Malabar Parakeet (a.k.a. Blue-winged Parakeet)	*Psittacula columboides*
45	Southern Coucal	*Centropus sinensis parroti*
46	Asian Koel	*Eudynamys scolopaceus*
47	Blue-faced Malkoha	*Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*
48	Sri Lankan Frogmouth	*Batrachostomus moniliger*
49	Crested Treeswift	*Hemiprocne coronata*
50	Malabar Trogon	*Harpactes fasciatus*
51	Common Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*
52	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*
53	Stork-billed Kingfisher	*Pelargopsis capensis*
54	Green Bee-eater	*Merops orientalis*
55	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	*Merops philippinus*
56	Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	*Merops leschenaulti*
57	Common Sandpiper	*Actitis hypoleucos*
58	White-cheeked Barbet	*Megalaima viridis*
59	Malabar Barbet	*Megalaima malabarica*
60	Nilgiri Flowerpecker	*Dicaeum concolor*
61	Indian Pitta (call heard)	*Pitta brachyura*
62	Lesser Yellownape	*Picus chlorolophus*
63	Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos nanus*
64	Black-rumped Flameback	*Dinopium benghalense*
65	Heart-spotted Woodpecker	*Hemicircus canente*
66	Yellow-crowned Woodpecker (call heard)	*Dendrocopos mahrattensis*
67	Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*
68	Hill Swallow	*Hirundo domicola*
69	Ashy Woodswallow	*Artamus fuscus*
70	White-browed Wagtail	*Motacilla maderaspatensis*
71	Grey Wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*
72	Orange Minivet	*Pericrocotus flammeus*
73	Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	*Hemipus picatus*
74	Flame-throated Bulbul	*Pycnonotus gularis*
75	Red-whiskered Bulbul	*Pycnonotus jocosus*
76	Square-tailed Bulbul	*Hypsipetes ganeesa*
77	Yellow-browed Bulbul	*Acritillas indica*
78	Grey-headed Bulbul	*Pycnonotus priocephalus*
79	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus cafer*
80	Golden-fronted Leafbird	*Chloropsis aurifrons*
81	Asian Fairy Bluebird	*Irena puella*
82	Brown Shrike	*Lanius cristatus*
83	Philippine Shrike	*Lanius cristatus lucionensis*

84	Long-tailed Shrike	*Lanius schach*
85	Malabar Woodshrike	*Tephrodornis sylvicola*
86	Black-headed Cuckooshrike	*Coracina melanoptera*
87	Large Cuckooshrike	*Coracina macei*
88	Malabar Whistling Thrush	*Myophonus horsfieldii*
89	Scaly Thrush	*Zoothera dauma*
90	Oriental Magpie Robin	*Copsychus saularis*
91	Ashy Prinia	*Prinia socialis*
92	Plain Prinia	*Prinia inornata*
93	Tytler's Leaf Warbler	*Phylloscopus tytleri*
94	Greenish Warbler	*Phylloscopus trochiloides*
95	Large-billed Leaf Warbler	*Phylloscopus magnirostris*
96	Common Tailorbird	*Orthotomus sutorius*
97	Jungle Owlet (call heard)	*Glaucidium radiatum*
98	Emerald Dove	*Chalcophaps indica*
99	Spotted Dove	*Spilopelia chinensis*
100	Laughing Dove	*Spilopelia senegalensis*
101	Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher	*Culicicapa ceylonensis*
102	Black-and-orange Flycatcher	*Ficedula nigrorufa*
103	Asian Paradise-flycatcher	*Terpsiphone paradisi*
104	Asian Brown Flycatcher	*Muscicapa latirostris*
105	Brown-breasted Flycatcher	*Muscicapa muttui*
106	Nilgiri Flycatcher	*Eumyias albicaudatus*
107	Blue-throated Flycatcher	*Cyornis rubeculoides*
108	White-bellied Blue Flycatcher	*Cyornis pallipes*
109	Pied Bushchat	*Saxicola caprata*
110	Common Hawk Cuckoo	*Hierococcyx varius*
111	Purple Sunbird	*Cinnyris asiaticus*
112	Loten's Sunbird	*Cinnyris lotenius*
113	Crimson-backed Sunbird (a.k.a. Small Sunbird)	*Leptocoma minima*
114	Oriental White-eye	*Zosterops palpebrosus*
115	Scaly-breasted Munia	*Lonchura punctulata*
116	White-rumped Munia	*Lonchura striata*
117	Baya Weaver	*Ploceus philippinus*
118	Black-headed Ibis	*Threskiornis melanocephalus*
119	Malabar Starling	*Sturnia malabarica blythii*
120	Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*
121	Lesser Hill Myna	*Gracula religiosa*
122	Indian Golden Oriole	*Oriolus kundoo*
123	Black-hooded Oriole	*Oriolus xanthornus*
124	Black Drongo	*Dicrurus macrocercus*
125	Ashy Drongo	*Dicrurus leucophaeus*
126	Bronzed Drongo	*Dicrurus aeneus*

127	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	*Dicrurus paradiseus*
128	Rufous Treepie	*Dendrocitta vagabunda*
129	White-bellied Treepie	*Dendrocitta leucogastra*
130	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*
131	Indian Jungle Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*
132	Blyth's Reed Warbler	*Acrocephalus dumetorum*
133	Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo	*Surniculus dicruroides*
134	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter nisus*
135	Shikra	*Accipiter badius*